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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BRUSSELS 004688

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/RPM AND EUR/ERA
SARAJEVO FOR AMB MCELHANEY

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SUBJECT: DSACEUR BRIEFS NAC-PSC ON TRANSFER OF SFOR TO
OPERATION ALTHEA

REF: SARAJEVO 02663

Classified By: USEU polmil officer Jeremy Brenner for reasons 1.4 (b) a
nd (d)

11. (C) Summary: DSACEUR, General Sir John Reith briefed the NAC-PSC Ambassadors on the progress of the December 2 SFOR handover to the EU's Operation Althea. Delineation of tasks has been worked out between commanders on the ground, and Headquarters staffs are more than 80 percent filled. General Reith -- and the EU -- are determined to make Althea succeed, and have addressed concerns over clarity of decision-making and bureaucratic interference. The EU's entire ESDP apparatus has worked hard for several months to ensure a successful post-SFOR mission. End summary.

DSACEUR

12. (C) The New Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe, General Sir John Reith briefed the NAC-PSC October 25 on the state of preparations for the December 2 end of the NATO SFOR mission and the beginning of the EU's Operation ALTHEA. Wearing both his NATO and EU hats as operational commander of the EU mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Reith noted that steady progress was being made. While shortfalls remain in intelligence and aviation assets, both the NATO Headquarters and EUFOR HQ were staffed at better than 80 percent. The commanders on the ground recently agreed to a delineation of tasks in further evidence of their positive working relationship. The final confirmation of the agreed delineation of tasks will be made November 4 during DSACEUR's visit to Sarajevo.

13. (C) General Reith noted that he was the only person in the room who works for both NATO and the European Union. He reminded the assembled Ambassadors that he is NATO's Strategic Coordinator with the EU, and he suggested he would ask the EU to make him their Strategic Coordinator with NATO.

14. (C) DSACEUR assured the political bodies of the two organizations that cooperation is going well. He said this is the case within SHAPE, where the EU OHQ cell is "well embedded" and is able to draw on full staff support. The EU Command Element within JFC Naples is working well, and COMSFOR and COMEUFOR have excellent relations on the ground.

15. (C) General Reith reiterated the need for the force commander on the ground to have maximum flexibility in concentrating his forces where they are needed. National caveats restrict this ability and should be avoided if possible. Reith urged that in cases where legal interpretations or logistical limitations made caveats necessary, nations declare them from the outset so the commander knows the restrictions under which he must work.

Common NATO Assets

16. (C) EU Council HiRep, Javier Solana, said the PSC had approved a list of assets and capabilities that the EU would be requesting from NATO to support EUFOR under the auspices of Berlin Plus. USNATO Ambassador Burns, after thanking General Reith for his informative brief, announced that the US has informed the government of Bosnia-Herzegovina that it would accept its offer to remain in Tuzla at Camp Eagle after the end of SFOR.

UNSCR

17. (C) British Permanent Representative to NATO, Amb. Peter Ricketts, informed the NAC-PSC that while work continued in NY on drafting a new UNSCR, it was unlikely that it would be complete before the British turned over the UNSC presidency to the US. Several Ambassadors noted the importance of a new resolution and urged that it be completed and approved quickly.

Comment

18. (C) The EU political leadership is keenly aware of the pitfalls and historical baggage that face them in Bosnia-Herzegovina (reftel). EU officials at all levels stress the robustness of the mission -- an answer to concerns about IFOR hesitancy. DSACEUR's detailed outline of the liaisons and the positive working relationships among commanders should help assuage concerns over crossed lines of authority or muddled decision-making. EU military officials have made clear that COMEUFOR will have the necessary authority -- without micromanagement from Brussels -- to work out areas of overlapping responsibilities with NATO HQ. The entire ESDP apparatus within the EU -- political and military -- from Solana on down has been consumed for months with the sole focus on ensuring a seamless and successful mission.